

Executive Director's report

USA Field Hockey Board of Directors, Sunday, February 13, 2011, ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex, Orlando, Florida

This report is broken into a number of components and deals with topics of interest that principally have taken place since the last USAFH Board meeting in Phoenix.

The National Club Championship and our strategy for subsequent years. As reported in a recent weekly report, the field for the inaugural USAFH National Club Championship filled in 68 seconds. We increased the field to include 32 teams per age group, and, therefore, have a total field of 64 teams. The FH marketplace found this opportunity quite appealing (which was easily predictable). The first come-first served basis of entry in the inaugural year was intended to gauge the interest. The interest was overwhelming, and, as a result, we will set the stage and process for qualifying for the 2012 USAFH NCC. Qualifiers will be operated by 'private entities' outside of USAFH staff; will be assessed a 'Qualifier status' fee; and will be located geographically appropriate to enable the most teams access to attempt to qualify. We also anticipate creating an U15 NCC for 2012. Discussions are underway to potentially make the U15 NCC a part of the ESPN RISE Games in Orlando....in July. That may or may not work.

Beyond 2012, we anticipate the NCC concept to continue enlarging to include other age groups and both genders. In effect, the NCC concept seems to be a logical approach to creating growth of clubs and USAFH members. The concept supports the mantra of creating more opportunities to play.

NCC Qualifiers/Sanctioning of privately held events. USAFH does not have a sanctioning process in place. Typically NGBs sanction events (i.e. approval of privately conducted events through agreement by the private entity to conduct the event according to the rules established by the NGB, and that all participants are members; in exchange, the event promoter receives insurance and the creditability of the NGB imprimatur) to increase the spread of playing opportunities. Through a collaboration with ESIX (our insurance brokerage), USAFH staff is creating a sanctioning process. That process will be prepared and usable later this year. All future qualifiers will be required to become USAFH sanctioned events as will events without qualifier status (who wish USAFH association). Sanctioning will provide for increased numbers of events through insurance provision, and, perhaps, through the development of budget relieving opportunities made through USAFH to event producers.

Insurance Upgrades Earlier this year USAFH changed its insurance brokerage from Bollinger to ESIX. ESIX is an Atlanta based brokerage with clients in all areas of sport. Mike Price, ESIX's principal, will be on hand at this Board meeting to explain the assessment of our Bollinger derived insurance program and what we have in place today. It is quite a contrast.

Club Development Clubs are fundamental to USAFH's success. Mike Price will explain during the Board meeting the insurance enhancements we have provided for clubs, and they are significant. Additionally, we are enforcing that all members of USAFH approved clubs also be members of USAFH. The Board determined the membership requirement some time ago and that requirement has gone un-enforced.

Boys/Men Development This project is without a doubt a project of passion being carried on by Nick Conway. The development of a boys/men's program is a principal goal of people both members and non-members of USAFH. The project offers a real opportunity for long term growth for men in the USA wanting an opportunity to play hockey. This is from Nick:

WEST COAST

San Diego:

El Capitan High School, Mira Mesa High School, Otay Ranch High School and La Jolla High School are currently playing in a League. The League season operates during January and February with a plan to advance the best players into a San Diego High Performance Training Center team from March through June. A possibility exists to have a San Diego team entered into the Junior National Championships in 2010.

Los Angeles:

Presently two Club teams are playing within the Field Hockey Federation structure. Negotiations with FHF are advanced towards creating an FHF Technical Director position responsible for, amongst other things, the development of a Junior Club system with U12, U14 and U19 teams across all four FHF Club teams.

San Francisco:

The plan is to continue with the San Francisco High Performance Training Center under the guidance of Pat Cota and Steve Danielson. Pat and Steve are both representing the USA at the Indoor World Cup and discussions regarding formulating this plan will begin shortly after they return from that competition.

EAST COAST

Pennsylvania:

Plans are to divide PA into four regions and develop a regional competition. We are in the process of shipping equipment support to these programs.

District I + XII: Cris Maloney (Princeton)

District III + V: Matt Soto (Lancaster)

District II and XI: Shawn Hindy (Lehighton)

District VII + VIII: Jason Young (Western PA)

There remains a possibility that this develops into a six team project with additional teams from the suburban Philadelphia and Binghampton, NY areas.

Mid-Atlantic

Discussions are on-going about opportunities in the following areas; Virginia Beach, Hampton Roads, Richmond and Washington DC.

New York:

Opportunities may exist within the New York Club scene. Discussions in place with contacts at NEFHA and will begin shortly with New York based Club teams if the Mid-Atlantic region is non-responsive or unsuccessful.

Research Triangle

Seeding programs are possibilities in the Chapel Hill and Durham area. Discussions have taken place and information is pending.

It is hard, slow going at the moment. It is certainly not moving as fast as I would like and we are coming across several consistent hurdles but we are moving in a painfully slow but satisfactory direction.

Nick

Communication Platform development There has been an amazing amount of work done in the communication area over the past several months. By now, you all have seen the new approach we are taking regarding the USAFH magazine. To date, we have received great response that positively recognizes the magazine's format change. I have received two negative comments. One was that there were no articles referring to umpires in the first newly formatted magazine (that will be corrected in the next issue), and the other was from a mother protesting the use of Carrie's two page photo spread. The mom thought it was much too revealing (it was actually a photo used by *ESPN/ The Magazine* in the photo spread on athletes' bodies....and was quite dignified).

On our electronic platforms (i.e. Team USA site, Facebook, email-blasts, news-releasing, and the weekly report), we continue to get news to our membership and the mainstream in a rapid fashion and with platforms that are cosmetically appealing. Our on-line technology group, Ai Group, and our staff have experienced a number of challenges, and we are exploring all options to be sure we remain contemporary in our on-line capabilities and our abilities to readily deliver information.

USOC The relationship we have with the USOC is strong. I have found myself assigned to several new committees including the AAU Committee (to try to find common ground between the AAU and the USOC), and operations manager of a major USOC backed event coming to Colorado Springs later this year (doing this in off time). The USOC views our efforts for London as tenable and they are pushing for a podium finish (also do-able).

Evaluation I appreciate the time Jim devoted to assembling the information relative to my annual evaluation, and providing the evaluation telephonically to me several weeks ago. This year has been a good first year effort, and with the composition of our staff containing many new members, we are

making definite strides due to our diversity of ideas both new and rehashed. The following items speak to elements within my evaluation:

-Board communication There was some expression of a need for more communication going to the Board. The weekly report contains a continual stream of information, but some information is not appropriate for that report. Of late, I have been sending several Board specific items and will continue doing so.

-Strategic Plan Implementation The staff and I will go through individual components of the strategic plan to determine an implementation plan. This process will begin in the next several weeks, and we should have a comprehensive implementation schedule in place by April.

-Business Plan I will work with Billie and others in developing a business plan for 2011 to be based upon the approved budget. This plan will be fluid and be updated consistently in subsequent years. This project should be complete by April.

-Revenue share proposition Several weeks ago I shared with both Jim and Billie a potential employee revenue share plan. This is a plan I have used in all the NGBs I have represented. My theory is/always has been that employees should be tasked with being efficient in programs to the extent of saving resources without eroding programs. This year will be the first year since 2002 that USA Field Hockey will derive a net plus number. Our current projection (with investment income) is \$223K in the black. Without investment income, we project \$149K. My proposition is that a threshold number must be met in order to have a revenue sharing program. I have kept that number to myself and it is \$120K. My proposal is to revenue share \$20K with equal shares (those employees with less than a year's experience receive an apportioned amount). Employees under contract (i.e. coaches and the executive director) are not eligible for revenue sharing. That is the essence of my proposal. Both Jim and Billie have reacted positively toward the proposition, but with the caveat that we wait until the year's results are independently audited. I respect that approach, but must offer up that waiting that long does lose the management impact of rewarding employees. I am hopeful we can have a discussion regarding this proposition.

Steve Locke

Executive Director; USA Field Hockey